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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
CHURCH AND STATE SCHOOLS BOTH
CHRISTIAN

BACCALAUREATE SERMON

Delivered June 3, 1900

By

GEORGE E. MACLEAN, Ph.D., LL.D.

President of the State University of Iowa



PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY

IOWA CITY, IOWA

1901

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.—
Acts, XI, 36.

In the nineteenth century we have become realists rather than nominalists. We quote with approval, "What's in a name?" The educational dictum is, "Study things before words." When we study words with the spirit of the realist we trace them to their origin. They become entities redolent of reality. All unconscious, we bring the cycle round to the truth of nominalism and realism combined.

There are life and history in a word. The Antiochian sneering appellation "Christian," representing the view of the highest culture of the Orient and Occident blended in Antioch, was antithetical to the simple esoteric name "disciple." Disciple was a schoolman's term used by the philosophers, implying the devotion and obedience of a pupil to his teacher and intimating that Christianity is essentially educational. The companions of Jesus, the members of the New Testament church, gave themselves the five names, disciples, followers, believers, brethren, and saints. The three times the word "Christian" is admitted to the New Testament are practically quotations from the lips of pagans. Slowly the term of shame is transmitted into one of glory, and then, in the essential meaning of the word, is synonymous with disciple. A Christian is literally "one belonging to the Christ." Christ in turn is the Greek for the Hebrew "Messiah," meaning "the Anointed." Christ is not the name of Jesus, but his title, "Jesus the Anointed." Jesus was too great to become the founder of a sect. Jesus-ites could not spring from Him

who was endowed with the title "The Anointed." Jesus was not the founder of Christianity as he is superficially believed to be, but he *found* it. Christianity commenced with the creation, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God rejoiced. It was founded by God the Father when he "saw that all things were good." God-inspired, it has welled up in the hearts of the faithful of all ages. There was the church of the Jews. There was, according to St. Peter, the church of the Gentiles, roomy enough for Greeks, Romans, Orientals, and Barbarians, for "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

In the poesy of the Orient, "the Anointed" meant originally "the anointed by God's spirit, the inspired one." He became the natural leader who, later, by the ceremony of outward anointing, was recognized as prophet, that is, the poet of righteousness—or priest, that is, the man of prayer in the sense of aspiration and sacrifice—or as king, that is, the politically endowed, God's and the people's representative. In Jesus the Christ, or Anointed, to whom the spirit of God was given without measure, coalesced the poet, the prayer, the divine king or people's president. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

In the personality of the Peasant of Galilee we reach the culmination of the evolution of the inspired ones of humanity. As related to the ages before Him, He was, in His words, "One who came to fulfil." As related to the ages to follow Him, He was the type of a new humanity that with accelerated evolution should develop from the old, under the anointing or inspiration not only of the Father's spirit, but also of the example and spirit of the Christ. In scriptural language, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman * * * that

we might receive the adoption of sons, and because we are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The revision of the pagan meaning of the term "Christian," by which essentially it was made synonymous with "disciple or learner" of Jesus the Christ or Inspired, reconciled the church to the use of the term. But the pagan meaning survives side by side with the essential one. "Christian" is still a term of reproach, not only on the part of Moslem and Buddhist, but in certain circles of culture. The religion of Jesus has been confounded with the christianity sometimes merely crystalized, or better, petrified in dogmas and churches. The pagan name has shrivelled and constricted the thing until even historians like Gibbon, Draper, and even Andrew White, seem to exclaim, "Christianity, what crimes have been committed in thy name!" Let our reply be: "To the essential Christianity!" "Christian" is the synonym, not antithesis of disciple, follower, believer, brother, saint of the Holy Jesus, known as the Christ, the Anointed or Inspired One of history past, and Inspirer and Type of humanity to come.

The recent watchword has been "Back to Christ," amended to "Forward to Christ," but the true word is "Introspect! Circumspice, Suspice!" To the Christ, the Inspirer within, about, above us!

Beecher said, "Christianity is a soul-power, an invisible, immutable power in the world." In Beecher's time, Christianity was passing from the static to the dynamic stage. It is now rising to its original biologic form, and we say, "Christianity is a soul-life infused through the spirit of a sempiternal Christ, not only in the individual, but in nature and society. We do not simply imitate the Jesus of the first century and ask, "What would Jesus do," but we are inspired by the Christ spirit to live a Jesus today.

The Christian is more than the man of creed or cult or

church or conduct. He is the man of life, a disciple in the Anglo-Saxon quaint phrase, "A knight of learning of the living Christ." He is a man of growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The inspired man does not despise instruction. Coleridge was taught logic in his study of Milton's poetry, and held that the poet must be the strictest logician. The greater the inspiration, the wider and higher is the field of instruction. Pseudo-genius is an inflated idler, that disdaining common things soars high in the thin atmosphere of vanity, at last to fall in failure. God-given genius toils and soars to heights or falls to depths, seeking truth and bearing life—

"A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food."

Essential Christianity has been, and ever must be, a friend to education. The new education is largely the result of child study, and as modern psychology and philosophy show, must be essentially Christian. Aristotle pointed out that the aim of education was the cultivation of character. Our latest research apart from the influences of historical Christianity brings to the same thing. Education is not primarily the imparting of knowledge, but the development of the mysterious soul of the child. It is a growth that the teacher watches like a gardener. He tends it with the truth as a fertilizer; he waters the unfolding soul with his sympathies; he detects the law of its individual growth; with the sunshine of his personality, and radiance of his love he brings to full bloom the character of the child. Physical training and parental discipline are a trellis to support temporarily the soul plant, and to teach it adjustment.

In these days of evolution the law of service of others, or self-sacrifice if need be, is inculcated in the individual as he is seen to spring from the root of a common humanity. He is but one plant in a garden of plants of like order, living with and for others as well as himself, and

bearing fruit for the gardener. Life immortal deepens the significance revealing this earthly paradise as an antitype of a heavenly paradise. Let us reiterate, we are speaking of the deliverances of modern pedagogy, and not of professed Christianity. The oneness therefore of essential Christianity and of modern education appears.

Of necessity, progressive education is Christian education. Through the pathway of science we have come to see, in the words of Professor Levi Seeley, that "the coming of Christ marked a new era both in religion and education." It is suggestive that the modern authorities on pedagogy have their chapters on Christian education, and point out the pedagogical truth of Christ's teaching. Seeley following the commonplace authorities says, "The central pedagogic truth of Christ's teaching is this, all education is for the individual." He contrasts Oriental education as having for its end the interests of the state, and Christian education as having for its end the interests of the individual.

Let us in the interest of the whole truth revert to the principles of our discourse and not follow the pedagogists as they tend to follow the theologists in the error of putting Christ's teaching into the place of the Christ-life. Professor Seeley's dogma, supposed to be drawn from the Christ's teaching that all education is for the individual, and his glib contrast between the interests of the State and the interests of the individual contradict the utter self sacrifice in life and death of the individual Jesus for all humanity. Christian education makes the most of the individual in order to make the most of the state as a free government in a universal brotherhood of man that shall be a kingdom of heaven on earth.

All our studies to this point have established it philosophically that essential Christianity would educate scientifically, and that scientific modern education must be essentially Christian.

If we review the subject of Christian education histori-

cally in this century, and particularly in the United States, we shall be brought to the same conclusion. The fathers of the republic, in the ordinance of 1787 for the government of the Northwest Territory, the Magna Charta of the public school system, recognizing that "religion, morality, and intelligence are necessary to good government and human happiness," made it law that these "should forever be encouraged." Public education was by this organic act to be Christian education. With a practice sometimes more, sometimes less Christian, not until recently has the subject been cleared up. The provision that church and state should be separated, the traditions of church and college education for a long time set forth a contradiction between sectarian and secular education, between a Christian or religious, and an unchristian or godless education. At length we have learned that separation between church and state does not imply antagonism. A deeper philosophy and higher Christianity have shown that the distinction between secular and sacred is nominal. There has developed a positive Christly charity immeasurably superior to the old boasted negative toleration. A severe sectarianism has yielded to a complacent and partially co-operative denominationalism. A larger Americanism, conscious of a new nationality with a mission for humanity, roots itself in a basic spiritual life, and is not afraid that religion and morality in the schools will trench upon liberty of conscience and degenerate into sectarianism. By common consent therefore, the contrast now is not between the Christian and the Godless state school, but between the church and the state school both essentially Christian. Did I say contrast? I should have said comparison. Let us go further. We hope the day is at hand when we may expect co-operation between the church and the state school, each having its sphere, each lending a happy influence to the other and a lustre to our common American education.

Let us be thankful that the various churches in the era of America's continental expansion not only planted their sanctuaries upon the prairies, but also their schools, and especially their colleges, in order that the old civilization and Christianity might not perish amidst the poverty of the pioneers.

Let those of us who are churchmen be equally thankful that the strength and treasury of the churches, all but over-taxed to sustain missions the globe around, are not required single-handed to support church schools and colleges, but these are supplemented and complemented by the public schools maintained by the service and treasury of the state. In fact, a silent conquest of the public school has been made by religion. As it has been done without impairing freedom or liberty of conscience, there is no friend of humanity who may not rejoice.

Despite philosophical demonstration, and the historical survey of tendencies, some excellent person with more of denominational zeal than knowledge, or some extreme sentimentalist, suspicious of any religious enthusiasm, will object that the speaker's wishes are the father to his thoughts. Christian education by church or state must meet the test of the practical. What are the facts? On the one hand, the church schools are belittled as sectarian and accused of narrowness and bigotry; on the other, the state schools are denounced as Godless and as promoting indifference, skepticism, and even immorality. An impartial study of the curricula, faculties, students, and alumni of both classes of institutions will show little difference. The older so-called church colleges like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Amherst, Williams, and the oldest imitators of these in the West, have opened their curricula to the widest extent to the modern secular studies. They have reduced to a minimum, if they have not abolished, as requirements the specifically Christian and ethical branches. The same liberties are granted to

the students that are bestowed in the freedom of the state institutions. These colleges are eager to deny that they are sectarian in spirit, or even denominational to any appreciable extent in administration. Creedal tests are not applied in the selection of professors, and occasionally men known not to be adherents of Christianity are tolerated on their faculties. The supreme tests are those of character and scholarship.

The census of the students in the older church colleges does not show a larger proportion of membership in church than in state institutions. With the exception of the survival here and there of compulsory chapel attendance, the religious life of the students is free and voluntary. In matters of conduct, if one could rely upon the press reports, there is apt to be more of the mediæval if not of the absolutely immoral behavior in these institutions that by tradition have been supposed to have peculiar prerogatives over-riding the common law of the land.

Proportionally more of the alumni of the church schools are found in the holy ministry as will be natural where parental influence has destined youth for the ministry and selected the college with that in view. The proportionate decrease of alumni entering the ministry in recent years may or may not be significant on account of the emphasis of the need of Christian men in all walks of life. The recognized leadership of the alumni in these colleges in church and state bears witness to the scientific advance and maintenance of manliness in these seats of learning.

Originally the state institutions practically copied the curricula of the older church institutions, including the specifically religious studies. More speedily than their elder sisters they ceased to require these studies, but for the most part they have not ceased to maintain them or in the most modern times to offer electives pertaining even to Biblical literature, languages and history.

The character as well as the scholarship of the faculties

has been pre-eminent, and with occasional exceptions, it has turned out that the members of the faculties were men of religious life and church membership. A series of denominational colleges could be gathered from the student body in a state university and generally there would be more students of a given denomination than in the largest church college in the state.

The students in the earlier years were required to attend chapel, those having conscientious scruples being excused. In the interest of having no discrimination and in harmony with the tendency to make voluntarism the responsible center of development of religion and character, the compulsory attendance at chapel was abolished. The voluntary religious activities of professors and students, the various religious and philanthropic associations have greatly multiplied. Student conduct, subject chiefly to faculty counsel and primarily to the civil law, has been for the most part exemplary. Self government and a high sense of moral responsibility resting upon the code of honor have developed.

The alumni while furnishing a smaller quota to the holy ministry have furnished many able christian laymen, leaders in their communities, and have made a noticeable contribution to the service of the state. The applied Christianity of a representative of these institutions, of our university, appears in the words of one of our brilliant and beloved graduates, Mr. Lowden, in his address at the anniversary of the Grant Club of Des Moines: "And oh! the ideal democracy of those college years we spent in Iowa's ancient capital! Better than any equation the mathematical works contained, was the uniform equation between the student's status and the student's worth. Better than the fierce war of competition which economics taught us, was the co-operation we practiced—and co-operation already begins to soften to rigors of competitive strife. Better than the doctrine of evolution which our

science proved, was our own experience that when being mounted up to man, love came into the universe to shield the weak. Better than the Ideal Republic of Plato, which came from out the passages of his stately prose in outlines so clear they seemed to be seen through Athens' air, was the actual republic which had its seat within the campus at the newer 'Athens of Iowa.' I see some of my old friends and class-mates about me tonight, and I call them to witness that for happy, hopeful, helpful years we shall never see their like again. It was, as I have said, the ideal democracy."

The nineteenth century amidst its unexampled activities has witnessed the upheaval of elemental forces. We have been wont to dwell upon the political revolutions and wars from those of Napoleon changing the face of Europe, through those remaking the continent of Asia and at this moment of Africa, to those of the United States changing the balance of the hemispheres. To us indeed, "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of a balance." "Behold!" in these last days "we take up the isles as a very little thing." With Whitman, we sing the song of science and invention and all the conquests of commerce.

The gigantic form of democracy leads the much praised hosts of progress. Before the supreme influences of the century, often unheeded, ever changing or progressing in form, irradiating the portentous face of democracy, have been Christianity and education. When they are blended in Christian education, they become the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to guide the century's pilgrims.

There is a famous painting entitled "Philosophy and Religion." In the center sits an old man of noble mien bent over open tomes and manuscripts piled about him. At his side are retorts and alembics speaking of science.

The sage has sought wisdom and immortality in scholarship. His death moment is at hand, and as his head is about to fall forward, his whole form bespeaking dissatisfaction and failure, his eye lights up with faith as it catches sight of the long unobserved picture upon the wall of the Madonna and Christ-child.

The dying scholar is transformed into the wise man. In the moment his heart is open to the simple story of divine love revealed in the mysterious but common mother-love and in the sweetness of child innocence with its possibilities of purity, virtue, and perfection through growth and suffering. Anointed by the Christ-spirit the old man becomes an "inspired one" and full of hope in death.

The world in these pessimistic times burdened with knowledge and "problems" needs "inspired men" and inspired and instructed youth with courage to live. Have faith in the simple story pictured on the walls of history in the Gospels, and inwrought in the nature of man and things. Seek the Christ-spirit's inspiration.

ADDRESS TO CLASSES.

Members of the classes of 1900: With your classes the nineteenth century is rounded out. Marvelous are the changes in college life in matters of morals and religion since the opening of this century in the colleges of America. It is a notorious fact that at the close of the eighteenth century open infidelity prevailed at Yale, and its sister colleges were little better. It is reported that when the elder President Dwight became president there was but a handful of students who would own the name of Christian. Not only was religion a subject of derision supposed to be forever exploded, but debauchery and drunkenness were prevalent. Compulsion, with its attendant hypocrisy, was the law with reference to every college duty. Voluntaryism with its joy of freedom and with its development of the sense of responsibility is a child of the Christ's

spirit of Jesus, with His "Whoever will," and of the modern pedagogy. Contrast the old college with its rules and regulations, and with its assigned work, with the freedom of your self-government, and with your numberless voluntary associations grouped about the elective courses. In the best moods and the tender moments of this commencement season, touched by gratitude to your professors and to the bounty of Iowa, may you consecrate yourselves to the maintenance and elevation of the ethical and religious standards of your Alma Mater.

In this era of our new development, under the liberality of the state, may you continue to prove that it is men and not moneys that make institutions. May each of you of whom it may not heretofore have been true, become a disciple who need not be ashamed to be called a Christian. May those of you who bear that sacred name live out its best meaning and remember that Christian education is not confined to the college but is continuous. May the symbol of two circles ('00) designating the classes of 1900, classes I shall never forget as being the first to pass out under my presidency here, remind you of infinity and perfection and of the possible destiny of your personalities through Christian education.

It is mine in behalf of Faculties and of the whole University family to bid you God-speed today. But it was another President who welcomed you to the University. He was a noble specimen of Christian education in home, church, college, and country. In the golden autumn, under yonder oaks, you laid that fine face and form to rest. But his manly spirit, death-crowned, works on in the University, and its voice from out the infinities may be among the first to welcome you to the higher life.

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